

A NEW ALETRIS FROM FLORIDA

BY GEORGE V. NASH

This, the fourth species of this genus growing within the confines of the United States, was found in the pine lands in the vicinity of Jacksonville, Fla., by Dr. Small and the writer in the fall of 1901, and at present is known only from that section. Its habitat is similar to that of the other species, and its manner of growth the same. The clusters of elliptic light green leaves grow singly or in tufts, and it was in this condition that it was collected and brought to the New York Botanical Garden, where it has since been growing among the temperate collections in the conservatories. At the time of collection we were under the impression that we had secured sterile plants of one of the three species already known, and it was not until it flowered in June of this year that this impression was dispelled. I have seen two of the other three species growing, and as soon as this one came into flower I was sure it was new. Its perianth more nearly approaches that of *A. aurca* Walt., but in that species the flower is yellow and the segments of the perianth longitudinally crested. This new species has the mouth of the perianth more contracted than in any of the others, giving it a distinctly obovate shape, the character suggesting its specific name.

Of the three species, other than this, the more common is *A. farinosa* L., which has a white cylindric perianth. This has an extended range, growing from Maine to Ontario and Minnesota, south to Tennessee and Florida and west to Louisiana. *A. aurca*, already referred to, is more restricted as to its northern extension, but ranges along the gulf coast as far as Texas; it is also reported from southern New Jersey. The second yellow-flowered species, *A. lutea* Small, is much more confined, extending no further north than Florida, and only west as far as Mississippi. It was collected by the writer in 1894 in central peninsular Florida, in the neighborhood of Eustis, Lake Co., where it is quite common, and was distributed by him as *A. aurca*, from which it differs in having a cylindric perianth instead of a campanulate or oblong-globose one.

There are then, it will be seen from the above, two species with cylindrical perianths, one white and the other yellow, and likewise one each, white and yellow, with a much broader perianth, ranging from campanulate to obovate.

It may be interesting to note that this small genus, comprising about ten species, has had a most restless career, so far as its family relationship is concerned. It has been placed in the Haemodoraceae, Amaryllidaceae, and the Liliaceae; in the first one by no less an authority than Bentham and Hooker and in the last by as great and more recent an authority, Engler and Prantl, who make it the sole genus of a single tribe in that family.

In addition to the four species known from the United States, there are six species in eastern Asia, extending from Japan to Borneo, so that for a genus so small in numbers it covers a rather extended territory.

A detailed description of the new species follows :

✓ **Aletris obovata.** — A tufted perennial with long slender stems and inflorescence and obovate white perianth. Stems 5–7 dm. tall, striately ridged, leafy: leaves sessile, the basal narrowly elliptic to obovate-lanceolate, narrowed at the base, acute at the apex, glabrous, 6–8 cm. long, 1–2 cm. wide, 9–11-nerved, bordered by a narrow translucent margin, abruptly passing into the bract-like leaves of the stem which are lanceolate and 1.5 cm. long or less: inflorescence 2–4 dm. long, slender: flowers numerous, spreading, on pedicels about 2 mm. long which are subtended by two bracts: perianth obovate, 6–7 mm. long and about 5 mm. in diameter, white, rugose, 6-angled, the angles rounded, the segments united for about three fourths their length, the free portion incurved, the tips of the outer ones greenish: stamens adnate to the perianth for a little more than one half their length, the filaments glabrous, the free portion subulate and diverging, the anthers cinnabar: ovary ovate-conic.

Collected in pine land, Jacksonville, Fla., by Nash & Small, November, 1901, no. 381, living plants only, and neither in fruit nor flower. Flowered at the conservatories of the New York Botanical Garden in June, 1903.

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